



NEWS RELEASE

STATE OF NEBRASKA

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)
2433 N.W. 24th St., Lincoln, NE 68524-1801

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cleanup Efforts Continue; Missouri River Reaching Flood Stage in some Locations

Cleanup continues in Pilger and other northeastern Nebraska communities affected by the recent storms. Approximately 1,800 volunteers have registered to assist with cleanup and recovery efforts. Shannon Chesnut, village clerk at Beaver Crossing, volunteered in Pilger on Thursday providing support to city officials as they continue their recovery efforts. Chesnut has experience with recovery efforts after Beaver Crossing was struck by a tornado on May 11.

Additional rainfall is forecasted in northeastern Nebraska and along the Missouri River. The National Weather Service warns that the Missouri River is reaching flood stages in the following cities: Blair, Omaha, Plattsmouth, Nebraska City, Brownville, and Rulo. NEMA will continue to monitor river levels and participate in daily flood updates.

Additional information, photos, and videos can be found on the following NEMA sites: <https://www.facebook.com/nema.page>, <http://www.youtube.com/user/TheNEMAtube>, and <https://twitter.com/NEMAtweets>.

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency

A NEMA field team and the NEMA mobile emergency operations center continue to work with local emergency management staff on the response in Pilger and surrounding areas. Damage assessment teams are working throughout the damaged areas to determine the extent of damage.

The State Emergency Operations Center at NEMA in Lincoln is staffed 24/7 with NEMA staff and representatives of state agencies. The NEMA field team remains in Pilger working on the response effort. Another NEMA team is assessing damage in the rural area in the towns affected by Monday night's storm.

NEMA encourages residents to continue following the instructions of local officials who are still working to assist individuals and families in the impacted areas.

Citizens are urged to avoid the Pilger area if possible to keep roads open for emergency response.

Red Cross

The Wisner shelter (housed in the Wisner-Pilger Jr./Sr. High) will remain open until further notice. The shelter is unable to house pets, but the Red Cross has boarding options available to those in need. Health services are available for those dealing with lost medications, lost durable medical equipment, and to assist with injuries. Meals are being provided by the Salvation Army & Red Cross.

Volunteering

Nebraska Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NE VOAD) is coordinating with various organizations that are volunteering to assist. Some of the organizations currently providing on-the-ground assistance include Mennonite Disaster Service, World Renew, Noah's Canine Crisis Response Dogs, Red Cross, Team Rubicon, Christian Aid Ministries, Serve Nebraska, All Hands Volunteers, Southern Baptists, the Salvation Army, and Samaritan's Purse.

According to Susan Epps, NE VOAD Chair, volunteers may arrive at the Wisner-Pilger Jr./Sr. High (801 18th St.) on the west edge of Wisner at 6:30 a.m. to register. Registration for the day will end at 3 p.m. Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age. Volunteers will work in Pilger between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Volunteers must have a photo ID and will be bused in to Pilger and assigned groups to perform debris removal. Volunteers **MUST** check-in each day at the Wisner-Pilger Jr./Sr. High – volunteers from a previous day will **NOT** be allowed into Pilger without going to the school first. Volunteers who arrive directly in Pilger will **NOT** be allowed to enter the town.

Persons who want to volunteer for tornado recovery in Wayne and Dixon County should report to the Wakefield Fire Hall, 405 Main Street between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. daily until further notice. Suggested minimum age of volunteers is 19 years, or bring parental consent if younger.

All volunteers are encouraged to wear sturdy work shoes, long pants, hats, work gloves, safety glasses and bring insect repellent and sunscreen. Volunteers are advised to stay hydrated as temperatures in the area are expected to reach into the 90s.

Donations

Monetary donations continue to be the best way to help the citizens in Stanton County. Multiple funds have been setup for the communities of Pilger and Stanton. The funds listed below are the funds that NEMA is aware of at this time; should additional funds become available, additional information will be provided. **Please contact NEMA with additional fund information to be added to future news releases.**

For Pilger, financial donations can be made at any Midwest Bank branch, referencing the "Pilger Emergency Fund." Checks with a note referencing the "Pilger Emergency Fund" may also be mailed to:

Pilger Emergency Fund
Midwest Bank, Norfolk Branch
2501 West Benjamin Ave.
PO Box 886
Norfolk, NE 68702-0886

A fund has been setup for the six rural Stanton families displaced from their homes. Financial donations for these specific families can be made at the Stanton State Bank, referencing the

“Stanton Tornado Relief Fund.” Checks with a note referencing the “Stanton Tornado Relief Fund” may also be mailed to:

Stanton Tornado Relief Fund
Stanton State Bank
PO Box 437
Stanton, NE 68779

For Pilger and Stanton tornado victims, financial donations can be made at the Stanton State Bank, referencing the “Pilger/Stanton Tornado Relief Fund.” Checks with a note referencing the “Pilger/Stanton Tornado Relief Fund” may also be mailed to:

Pilger/Stanton Tornado Relief Fund
Stanton State Bank
PO Box 437
Stanton, NE 68779

Those who would like to help by making a donation to American Red Cross Disaster Relief can do so by visiting www.redcross.org, calling 1-800-RED CROSS or texting the word REDCROSS to 90999 to make a \$10 donation.

A new collection site for material donations (no clothes or shoes) has been set up at the Wisner Auditorium. This site will be open from June 22 to July 2. Items will be used by people directly affected by the storm.

Nebraska National Guard

Twenty Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers from the 189th Transportation Company from Norfolk and Wayne continue to serve on State Active Duty in Pilger, where they are assisting local officials in maintaining public safety in and around the community following Monday afternoon's devastating storms. The Soldiers are working primarily at four entry control points leading into Pilger.

Nebraska State Fire Marshal

State Fire Marshal, Jim Heine, has received inquiries from homeowners wishing to begin burning houses destroyed by the storm. He urged residents to contact their insurance agents before proceeding.

Fire Marshal staff continue to be available to perform damage assessment of commercial and residential structures. Contact the State Fire Marshal's main office at 402-471-2027 for more information.

The Fire Marshal encourages volunteers to stay hydrated in the heat. Watch your step and use extreme caution in the area as nails and metals are strewn about.

Nebraska Department of Agriculture

Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) Director Greg Ibach continues to encourage producers who suffered livestock losses due to the tornado to keep detailed records documenting those losses as they continue to work to address storm damage.

Documentation could include third-party verification of the loss, such as a statement from a veterinarian or county extension agent, photographs, or receipts for expenses associated with carcass removal / disposal.

Producers are encouraged to contact their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) to determine what type of documentation might best fit their circumstances. Federal programs such as the Livestock Indemnity Program are available for qualified producers.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has monetary assistance available to help producers affected by the tornado to properly dispose of animal carcasses through a special Livestock Mortality Initiative through NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Livestock producers who experienced death losses are encouraged to contact their local NRCS office to sign up for the Initiative and to work with NRCS staff to develop a recovery plan that best meets the needs of their operation. NRCS can also assist in windbreak repair, replacing fences and repairing terraces and other conservation practices. Interested producers need to contact the local NRCS office as soon as possible.

NDA has sent a Livestock Emergency Disease Response System (LEDRS) trailer with supplies to the affected area. NDA staff members are helping to coordinate relief efforts from the State Emergency Operations Center and working with sister state agencies such as the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to assure the state is addressing producer needs.

Ibach also encourages individuals that have sustained crop damage in recent weeks to share that information with their local Farm Service Agency as well for any additional federal programs that might be available.

Counselors are available to those individuals that are feeling stressed and overwhelmed by the circumstances. Those individuals are encouraged to call the Rural Response Hotline at 800-464-0258.

Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

Jay Ringenberg, Deputy Director of DEQ, advised that his agency continues to make visits to feedlots to assess damages and work with producers on livestock disposal. Preliminary losses for livestock are lower than expected, but more information will be available after visits to smaller feedlots are completed. More than 140,000 chickens have been lost in the storm. His agency is working on proper disposal.

Many center pivots are down and with additional rain in the area livestock waste ponds may be filling up and pumps may be required to draw down the ponds. Wastewater facilities are up and running in Pilger.

Producers who need assistance with livestock disposal may contact DEQ at 402-471-2186 and ask for Waste Management.

Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR)

Hwy 15 remains closed from Hwy 275 (north of Pilger) to Hwy 32 (south of Pilger). US Hwy 275 is open, but people are advised not to stop or walk on the roadway.

South Dakota has contacted NDOR to advise that I-29 in South Dakota and Iowa will be closed due to flooding starting at noon on June 19.

Southbound I-29 traffic will be routed across the Vermillion bridge North of Sioux City to Hwy 12 in Nebraska and then onto Hwy 20 eastbound to re-enter I-29. Northbound I-29 traffic will be routed onto west Hwy 20 just south of Sioux City, to Hwy 12 and then across the Vermillion bridge and back onto I-29 northbound.

Nebraska Energy Office

The Nebraska Energy Office continues to monitor the energy sector critical infrastructure impacted by the storms.

The Nebraska Energy Office has a staff member in the State Emergency Operations Center gathering information. Gathering information entails contacting and coordinating with utilities and associations to obtain the number of meters out of service, the number of damaged poles, and the miles of transmission lines down and when restoration could be expected. The Energy Office also has a staff member conducting State business in the Pilger area. The staff member has been tasked with monitoring activities in the Pender and Fremont areas. The staff located in the Energy Office is tasked with supporting the staff at the State Emergency Operations Center and in the field.

Nebraska State Patrol

The Nebraska State Patrol's (NSP) Mobile Command Post remains on scene with troopers continuing to provide security for Pilger. NSP is coordinating vehicular access to the community for residents and volunteers. NSP personnel continue to provide assets and resources as requested.

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, feeling lost and overwhelmed is normal. But as recovery goes on, stress can cause physical symptoms, like upset stomach, headaches, and muscle tension. Signs and symptoms of stress overload include moodiness, anxiety, irritability, constant worrying, the inability to relax, feeling overwhelmed, a sense of loneliness or isolation, and feelings of depression.

People experiencing stress can call the Region IV Behavioral Health System office at (402) 370-3100 or the Rural Response Hotline at (800) 464-0258.

The community of Thurston's public water supply lost pressure due to storms Tuesday night. For that reason there is a **boil alert** for their community until further notice. The Pilger water supply is still under a **boil alert** until further notice.

If people have public health-related questions, they can contact their local health department. Here is a link to a list of local health departments in the state:

<http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Documents/contacts.pdf>

Nebraska Department of Insurance

The Nebraska Insurance Department offers these tips for individuals affected by recent storms:

- Contact your insurance company or agent as soon as you can.
- Take temporary measures to reduce further damage **but do not dispose of damaged property or make permanent repairs until your insurance company has inspected the damage**. Keep copies of expenses related to temporary repairs.
- If you need to relocate, keep receipts for your temporary living expenses.
- Maintain copies of all correspondence and take notes of your telephone conversations, including date and time of contact and name of person to whom you spoke.
- Obtain references, written estimates, proof of insurance and your insurance company's approval before authorizing a contractor to begin repairs.

If people have insurance-related questions or concerns, please call the Department of Insurance on its toll-free consumer hotline at 1-877-564-7323 or visit the Department's website at <http://www.doi.nebraska.gov>.

Information for Media

When arriving in Pilger, members of the media must check in at the command post next to the Nebraska State Patrol's Mobile Command Post for credentials, and check out at the same location prior to leaving. Vehicular traffic in Pilger is not allowed. Please stay out of damaged buildings as they are unsafe.

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